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HINTS AND METHODS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

(Continued.)

ARITHMETIC—CONTINUED.

Mental Arithmetic.

It is a matter of the first importance, that the teacher should have a distinct idea of the objects to be gained by the practice of mental arithmetic; as, otherwise, the main advantages that might result from it will assuredly be lost. Let it constantly be borne in mind, then, by the teacher, that the knowledge of arithmetic is *not* the chief benefit to be derived from it, but one of secondary importance. It is the mental discipline, the power of abstraction, the habit of attention and of reasoning which it develops, that constitutes its chief value. But all these advantages are lost, if the child is allowed to study the books more especially by working out the questions on the slate. They can only be completely attained, by calling on the class to solve each question *mentally*, merely from hearing it *once* read, and then to give a clear account of his mental operations. And, so beautifully are the questions arranged, so completely does the knowledge gained in each question, come into requisition in those that follow, that, if the plan of study be commenced right, and strictly followed, the most intricate and difficult questions will give no trouble to the class.

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It requires some tact, to gain the utmost advantage from mental arithmetic; but it is easily acquired. The main point is, that the attention of the teacher be kept *wide awake*. The dull and slow must be allowed time; the bright must not be suffered to monopolize the answers. At the same time, it will not do for the answers to be received, in the order in which the pupils stand in the class; for, in this case, only one child would be occupied at once. Each pupil would attend only to his own question; whereas all should be occupied, and should actually solve every question put to the class. The best plan, then, is, for each to hold up a finger, when ready to answer, leaving the teacher to select whose turn it shall be. Thus, every one might have an equal chance.—*Palmer's Manual*.

GEOMETRY.

Geometry includes knowledge of extension and form, and the properties of forms. Size and form are perceived by the senses; their properties are partly perceived by the senses, partly judged by the understanding. Of all mental processes this begins earliest, and depends least on the will. Its correctness in infants, depends

on the acuteness of the senses; in older persons, partly on the nice decision of the understanding. Present two oranges, differing in size, to an infant; it will almost certainly seize the larger. There seems no selfish emotion in the case; the two impress themselves on his brain as of unequal worth, and he stretches forth his hand for the larger. Let us suppose a child whose senses are rather dull, and let him receive the best training: let him discriminate his impressions, and interpret rightly all he learns through his senses. Meanwhile let a child of quick eye neglect to analyze and reflect on his impressions; and at the age of twenty, place before the two, complicated forms, or an irregular bit of ground, and the one who had originally least perception of size, will estimate them most truly. So much may mental training supply organic deficiencies.

We can do much, very early to aid the perception, and something to form the judgment.—When children are about five years of age, I make them acquainted with lines and forms, and their simple properties, in order. I have colored diagrams hung against the wall, to occupy the leisure moments. They draw straight lines on the board in every direction, and describe them. They try to enclose a space in two straight lines, and find out why they cannot. They enclose a space in three straight lines, and then in four, and so on, and learn the name of each figure. Then I ask them if they can enclose a space by one line of any sort; and show them that they can, by one which constantly changes its direction, because it will turn and meet itself, making an irregular curve, or a circle.

When lines are well understood I introduce angles, as the space included where straight lines cross; and show the properties of the right-angle, and of triangles. I illustrate fractions by showing the angles formed by the crossing of two straight lines, or of twenty straight lines in the same spot, to be always equal in amount; because the space remains the same, whether divided into two or twenty parts.

I give them solid blocks, and fix easily the name of each figure, cone, pyramid, cube; it saves many blunders.

I will spare you more instances, though I multiply them exceedingly in my teaching. All the aid which can be given in numbers is by securing practice, and by presenting them in numerous relations, so as to illustrate a question. Occasionally light is thus let in on the benighted listener, but usually the child clears himself by a way of his own; and every time he does, his faith and interest in numbers is increased. Each person forms, very early, some mode of calculating; fixes some favorite relations and facts in his memory, and from these deduces all the rest.

HISTORY.*

Naturally connected with the ideas of the surface of the earth, are those of remarkable events in different places, and of the past history of the earth's principal inhabitants. Although history, properly so called, should be perhaps the latest of all studies, there are certain leading ideas of great events and characters, which may be advantageously made known at an early period. As a basis of this knowledge the child must be led to the measurement of time. And here, as before, he must begin with what is within reach of his senses (or what may be popularly said to be so.) He must learn the comparative lengths of small portions of time,—as a minute, an hour, a day, a week. He should be led to think of the trifling events which he can recollect, in the order of time,—his getting up in the morning—his coming to school—his first lessons—his game in the play-ground. Having learned to conceive events of his own experience, in the order in which they occurred,—extending back over a continually increasing period,—his clear ideas of number acting upon these clear ideas of his own little chronology, will lead him to a conception of the chronology of the human race. The chronological order will be found the most natural and easy way of presenting such interesting facts of past history, as the child can comprehend.—*The Educator.*

The following hints are from *Home Education.*

Instead of requiring children to listen to, or to repeat what they will forget as soon as they can, and what can do them very little service while they may chance to remember it—as that Iceland is 'situated between the 63d and 67th degrees of north latitude, and the 12th and 25th degrees of west longitude; is 280 miles in length, and 180 in width; and that its population, according to the last census, is 53,000;'—and so forth; instead of this, let the scenes, the occupations, the habiliments, of an Iceland family, during their few summer days, and then during their long wintry months, be graphically described (and with an admixture of humor) and aided by the best pictorial representations that may be at hand. Descriptions of this sort, illuminated by the pencil, and vivified, when the means of doing so are available, by poetic extracts, will never be obliterated from the memory; and if this same method be carried forward, round the globe, the result, especially with children of vivacious minds, will be a general invigoration and enrichment of the faculties, apparent ever after in almost every sentence that is written or uttered.

The truth of history is always found to be a powerful recommendation of it, with children; and if it be thus conveyed in a vivid form to the conceptive faculty, it may supersede fiction, or weaken the taste for it. Moreover, when history is so taught as to lodge it firmly in the imagination, and it has this peculiar property, that it quickens the moral sentiments, and is a means of effecting an association, vastly important, between the moral emotions, the imagination, and the reason; and this assimilation of ideas is ef-

fected, not by formal attempts to bring it about; but by that purely spontaneous process which goes on in the mind when certain scenes are presented, embodying such and such elements of our moral nature.

Along with so much continuous narrative as may serve to give coherence to children's ideas, there may, with advantage (in regard to the conceptive faculty) be mingled what may be termed historical portraits, not indeed of individuals, but of classes of men, and of those classes which have had existence through long periods of time, and which are rarely made to figure, in a distinct manner, on the pages of history. Thus we should present, in succession, and actually pictured, as well as verbally described—the Egyptian Pharaoh, and his magicians—the Persian Magi, and the Cyrus (the Shah of three thousand years ago;) then the heroes of Homer's romances, and the real warrior statesmen of Athens, Sparta, Thebes, Macedon. Next, in solemn procession, come the Ptolemies, and the Antiochus's; along with the Jewish Pontiff, and the Rabbis. The consuls, the dictators, the orators, and the emperors of Rome, first western, and then eastern, bring up the train of the dramatic personæ of ancient history. In more lively and picturesque guise, advances the troop of European actors, including the popes, the abbots, the monks, the bishops, the barons, and the Scandinavian chiefs; the knight of the Crusades, and the Templar, with his companion Saracen; the bard and troubadour, the pilgrim, the bourgeois, the buccaneer; and the more modern representatives of each.

No philosophizing, no continuous moralizing, no rudiments of political or economical science; nothing but painting to the mind's eye, and actual painting to the bodily eye, should belong to the first conveyance of history. So conveyed, it becomes to the mind an unalienable and inexhaustible opulence, and when, in due time, it comes to be wrought upon by the severer faculties, it yields its sixty and hundred-fold of substantial wealth.

Study of History and Geography Connected.

History and Geography should be studied in their inseparable relations with each other. The pupil should be required to read history and biography with his atlas before him, and he should be instructed how to write the studies of Geography, Chronology, and History, by a modification of the exercise of map drawing, before described. Let the pupil, for instance, make an outline map of the State of Connecticut, and then begin to fill it up with the outline and names of the several towns in the order of time in which they were settled, adding the year and month in which each settlement was begun. Or, let him draw an outline map of the world, and then make as many copies (by tracing each with a pencil on a sheet of paper lying over it,) as there are great epochs in the history of mankind. Let him assign one copy to each epoch, and then draw the rivers, mountains and the boundaries of the different countries then known, the names of the cities, the dates of their foundation, and such other particulars belonging to each

* See also Connecticut Common School Journal, Vol. I, p. 113; Vol. II, p. 161.

epoch, as admit of being marked upon the map. On each should be set down the birth places and routes of celebrated persons, who have led armies, founded colonies, or changed the moral aspects of the age in which they lived—such as the journeys of our Savior, the travels of the Apostle Paul, the route of Columbus, the birth places of Alfred, Luther, Howard, Wilberforce, Washington, &c. A series of maps filled up in this way will be of invaluable service in fixing the great features and events of Geography and History, and as a means of self-improvement.

History in Connection with Reading and a School Library.

A mode of connecting the study of History with reading was pointed out under the head of Reading. If there is a Library connected with the school, or in the town to which the teacher can have access, the books relating to the history of this State or of the United States, or such portions of them as illustrate the great events and names of our past history, should be read by the teacher, or the pupils in turn, and then each member of the class should be called on to give an account of what had been read, orally or in writing.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR.*

"Though grammar be usually amongst the first things taught, it is always one of the last things understood," has been observed by an eminent authority;† and the truth of this observation is obvious to every one. Almost all the children at every school in the country are said to be learning grammar; and yet how few, even of those who have gone regularly through all the definitions, rules, and exceptions, can be said to have any real or practical knowledge of the subject. This arises not so much from the difficulty of grammar, as from the injudicious methods generally employed in teaching it.

Long before a grammar is put into the hands of the pupils in our schools, they are made practically acquainted with the principal parts of speech; particularly *nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs*. In fact, in teaching grammar, also, we begin with general views and leading principles. We tell them that all the words in the language are reduced to *nine* distinct classes; and that to know these nine classes, is to become acquainted with more than 50,000 words. We then gradually introduce them to the several classes; and first, to the *noun or substantive*; which we inform them is the *name of any person, place or thing*. We then add in explanation, that the word *noun* means a *name*, and the *SUBSTANTIVE*, any thing that has *substance or existence*. Hence, every word which expresses existence, either real or supposed, is said to be a noun or substantive. Thus the words *man, horse, book*, are said to be nouns or substantives, because they are the *name*, of things which *exist*; and the terms *virtue, vices, beauty*, are also said to be nouns or substantives, because they are the *names* of things which are

supposed to exist; that is, we think of them, and speak of them, as if they *actually existed*. The following example will serve to make this intelligible. The words in *italic* are nouns, because they are the names of things existing in *nature*; and the words in *SMALL CAPITALS* are also nouns, because they are the names of things existing in the *understanding*; that is, we have an *idea*, or notion of them; and we speak of them, and reason about them with as much certainty as if they *actually existed* before our eyes; nay, we attribute *actions* to them as if they were *persons* or *agents*:—

The *king* exalted him: *VIRTUE* exalted him.

The *king* degraded him: *VICE* degraded him.

The *jury* acquitted him: his *CONSCIENCE* acquitted him.

The *judge* condemned him: his *CONSCIENCE* condemned him.

For my *father's* sake, hear me! for *PITY's* sake, hear me!

John is cold: *Ice* is cold: *CHARITY* is cold.

The *farmer* stores his *barn* with *grain*; the *scholar* stores his *MIND* with *KNOWLEDGE*.

PROPER nouns are the names which are proper or peculiar to particular persons, places, mountains, seas, and rivers; as *John, Dublin, the Alps, the Atlantic, the Shannon*. COMMON names are so called, because they are the common or general names of individuals, or things, of the same species or sort. Thus the name *man* is common to, or may be applied to every man; but *John* is the proper or peculiar name of an individual. In the same way, *city, ocean, river*, are *common*, or general names; but *Dublin, the Atlantic, the Shannon*, are *proper* or *peculiar*.

Having given the pupils an idea of the noun or substantive, we call upon them to name all the objects which they see in the room, as *chair, table, book, desk, &c., &c.* All these words, they will readily understand, are to be *CLASSED* as nouns or substantives. They are next desired to mention all the things, which, though not the objects of their senses, they have an *idea* of, or can *think* about; as *goodness, happiness, sweetness, &c.* They are also frequently called upon to point out all the nouns or substantives in any sentence or passage assigned them; and to state what kind of noun each of them is, that is, whether it is a *real*, an *abstract*, a *common*, or a *proper* noun. This hunting after nouns, or particular parts of speech, is an animating, and always a favorite exercise with children.

In a similar way they are made practically acquainted with the other parts of speech. *Number, person, gender, case, and tense or time*, are also familiarly explained to them, long before they enter upon the regular grammar lessons. In fact, the majority of the children at our schools are taught grammar only in this way; and not a few of them, it may be safely asserted, have a more practical knowledge of grammatical principles, than many pupils at schools of a higher class, who have committed to memory all the definitions, rules, and exceptions, of the most approved grammars.—*Outline of Methods.*

Natural mode of teaching Grammar.

Success in teaching grammar depends par-

* See also Connecticut Common School Journal, Vol. I, p. 55; Vol. II, p. 13; Vol. III, p. 69, 89.

† J. Horne Tooke, in "The Diversions of Parley."

ticularly on the genius and judgment of the teacher, who must herself be interested in language, and able to trace it, as it gradually come into being to express man's ideas; and who must also have a nice knowledge of its rules and refinements.

I represent a man in the infancy of the world. He is surrounded by sensible objects, and appropriates a sound or name to each; he gives names also to the emotions they excite in himself; and he names persons. Thus he forms three kinds of nouns, of which I first give instances, and then each girl writes an example on the blackboard, and tells us whether it is abstract, common, or proper, and why. Then in some book, they point out the nouns; and say whether each expresses an emotion, idea, thing, or person. At first they call other words abstract nouns; say they have an idea of *black*, an idea of *forward*, but at last they learn to admit no words, but such as not merely suggest a fact, but themselves express the fact. They continue this until they can point out all the nouns in a page without fatigue; then I introduce number; ask how the savage could express to another whether he had seen one lion or more, and show how much shorter it is to say lions, than to repeat the word for each; then they point out the number of each noun in the printed book.

Next I take pronouns, words standing for nouns. I show how inconvenient it would be, to speak the name at full length, every time we mention the person; to say, "*Elizabeth*, lay aside *Elizabeth's* writing, and take up *Elizabeth's* book;" and it would have been still worse in ancient times, when the names were often very long. Think of a dialogue between a Sardanapalus and a Melchisadee, in which these names take the place of *you* and *me*! Children perceive at once the tediousness and uselessness of names when both parties are present. I explain grammatical person, and have each pronoun learned and declined, whenever it occurs. They tell to what the relative and personal pronouns refer; if adjective pronouns are mentioned, I say they only point out their nouns, they do not stand for them.

The savage observes also that the things around him, *act*; the tree *grows*, the water *flows*, he himself *moves*; these are all *acts*, but not the *act*; each must be expressed by a separate word, and these words being thought the most important in the sentence, are called *the words* or *verbs*. Then I explain the active verbs, and have lists of them made on the blackboard, and sentences formed in which they are used, and the reason given for their being called active. The agent and object are named, and I now explain the cases of nouns, and state that the nominative and object may be distinguished by their position and the probable meaning of the sentence; and that we used to express possession by such an expression as, "*John, his book*," afterward contracted to *John's book*."

The other kinds of verbs are practiced upon and sought in like manner; the passive form I show to be sometimes more convenient than the active; as when the object is one and the agents

many. For instance, "*the bird is tired*," tells us all we wish to know. We might say, *flying, seeking food, hopping from branch to branch, &c.* have tired the bird. Then I show that our imaginary savage found in objects, certain diversities; this tree was *green*, that *bare*, and he *added adjectives* to their names to express the states and qualities of the things. I let one child tell me the adjectives of color, another those of quantity, praise, &c.; and afterwards point them out in the book, with the nouns they describe. Then I say, here are two birds with sweet notes, but one sings better than the other; how shall we mark the difference in their voices? We can do it by adding two letters to the adjective which describes them. But I will inflict on you, my dear Mary, no more similar processes; you may not have my fondness for details. We examine every part of speech; first show the need of expressing a certain class of ideas, then the words invented for the purpose, and then point out these words in a book.

We use each part of speech in forming and analyzing sentences, while its meaning is fresh in the thoughts. I am a great economist in this respect. I never let my pupils learn words or rules to lay by, but bring them into use at once. I cannot bear to have a child learn, and forget, and learn again; and use is the only mode of engraving knowledge. After the first simple language, which answered the most immediate purposes, slighter feelings and distinctions were designated; a great variety of modes of expression were created. Not only new parts of speech, but new ways of changing and combining the old were formed, and relations were expressed by varying the position of words in a sentence. I think children taught as I have described, would find no difficulty in understanding this. They would find blank verse as easy as simple prose, because they would be guided by the meaning.

Theory of Teaching.

CONVERSATION AND COMPOSITION.

Nothing can exceed the distress caused to most children over six years, by a demand for composition; but these children would have been willing, at three, to describe every walk, object, or amusement they had enjoyed. At that age, need of sympathy and their great life lead them to reproduce; and the novelty of objects and the nice perceptions of children make them describe vividly and graphically. But we are apt to be too selfish and too much cumbered with other things. We check the flow of talk as it is gushing forth, and then, when we have leisure and inclination, we call the child to us, and wonder that it has nothing to say. If we are sitting alone in a room with nothing to engage a child, we may, with all our resources, find it difficult to fix its attention; but if we take it the length of the street, we shall be overwhelmed with questions. It has not in itself sufficient subjects for thought, and we must present these, if we would have the child talk or write.

Nearly the same training will secure the power of conversing and writing well; and both are far more in our power than we suppose. I speak

now chiefly of the latter, which beside the requisites for conversation requires the power of concentrating thought.

Savages, and children under little restraint, generally possess eloquence and ease of expression; and children should be encouraged to speak naturally and freely of all they see, think, and feel. Thus their conversation will be what it should be, the perfect reflection of all objects, colored by the individual soul; or rather the soul's myrrh and incense, its fruit and flowers, elaborated from the crude materials it has imbibed.

They should utter every emotion; they should make inquiries to the purpose, state their difficulties clearly, and strive always to express precisely what they mean. We are too indulgent to them in this respect. We are afraid to check their confidence, and are so glad to have them use their powers, that we are satisfied with very imperfect execution. I do not quite agree with Dr. Johnson that if a boy saw a thing out of one window, and said he saw it out of another, he should be whipped; but I do think the habit of describing accurately would be cheaply purchased by many whippings.

I read anecdotes from biography and mythology, apologues, fables, traits of heroism and generosity, and accustom the children to draw from each a moral. The next day they are repeated by the little girls, and written by the older ones.

When they can write with any undue anxiety concerning spelling, punctuation, blots, and all minor troubles, they write descriptions of simple objects, such as bellows, spectacles, carriages; mention their materials, and construction, and uses. They describe buildings and gardens, or rides they have taken. They write imaginary journeys, describing the people, customs, and scenery. Of course they consult books for these descriptions, but do not copy them. They write recollections of what they have read or heard during the week, translations, and turn blank verse into prose.

Some new thought is thus elicited; but I never require any thing original until the age of fourteen. At this age, the mind can generally fix itself on a subject, consider some of its bearings, and treat it clearly. At first, I give some hints, if they are very much desired by the children; but as soon as possible, I withdraw all leadings; for I wish not to impress myself, but to bring out their individuality. I let them choose their own subjects, if they are suggestive, and not exclusively of one cast.—*Ib.*

Composition of Short Sentences to be written on the Blackboard or Slate.

As soon as a child can spell and understand a few simple words, you should begin to exercise them in little sentences, and should continue the practice their whole school life.

Suppose you write the names of the colors, black, blue, &c.; and then let each child in turn mention all the things they can think of, which are black, blue, green, &c. They will say, "The grass is green; the trees are green; my frock is green; my lips are red; ink is black; the sky

is blue; my shoes are black," &c., &c.; and in a quarter of an hour you will have written a long spelling lesson. Another day, you may write down all that is sweet, sour, bitter; all they can think of that is hard, soft, rough, smooth, round, square, heavy, light; and so you may go on day after day. Sometimes let them dictate a text from Scripture which they wish to tell you of, or a verse of a psalm or hymn, or a proverb; but every day let some little matter be written on the board.

It is a good exercise sometimes to ask children to recollect all the objects they observed in the woods, fields, or lanes, as they walked to or from school, and let them bring the leaves of different trees, the wild flowers, &c., and then let them tell you how to spell the words.

Now, some people may tell you that it is of no use to teach these children these common easy things, and that all you should do, is to give them, what they call book-learning; but I assure you, that if you do not allow them to write, from their own heads, little sentences about easy matters they can think and tell about, they will never know how to express themselves properly or clearly; and if they can tell you in writing what they now know, and think, and understand about, when they have read and learned more, they will be able to write down their thoughts and recollections on other and more difficult subjects.

Sometimes you may ask the children to write down on their slates all the things which they know to be right to do, and all that they know to be wrong.

Write on your slates, or on the walls, the names of all fruit which grow on trees. The names of fruits which grow on bushes; what plants are cultivated for the roots? what for the leaves? what for the seeds? The seeds of what plant grow in pods like beans? what seeds grow at the top of plants like wheat? What trees are useful for timber? What trees are cultivated for the fruit they bear? What for both timber and fruit?

Mention all the creatures you can think of that feed on grass. Ask what is the color of grass? What is hay? When is the grass cut down? with what instrument is it cut down? Do you think the cattle would like to lie down on the hard road as well as the soft grass? Would you like to look at the fields if they were brown or red, as well as you do now that they are green?

Then say, "Now, write on your slates all you can think about grass; now, all you know about the different sorts of corn; all you know about garden vegetables, and the manner of cultivating them. What difference can you mention between birds and beasts? What difference between birds and fishes?"

The names of a great variety of substances, whether manufactured or unmanufactured, may gradually be arranged; and the colors, shapes, and uses added.

The following questions will serve for many different objects, and may follow up oral lectures on them:—

1. *On animals.*—What is that? Is it animal, vegetable, or mineral? To which class of ani-

mals does it belong? Is it a quadruped, a fish, a bird, a reptile, or an insect? Is it a part of, or the whole of one of these animals? What part? how used? how procured? what is made of it? Do you know where the animal lives? Can you tell me any of its habits or qualities? what it feeds upon? how it rears its young? whether useful to man for food, or for what other purposes? Is it used in trade or manufactures?

2. *On vegetables.*—What is that? Is it a part of any vegetable, or a whole tree, plant, or shrub? Is it a tree, a woody shrub, a plant, a grass, a fungus, or a part of any of these? the root, stalk, leaf, flower, fruit, or seed? Where is it cultivated? by whom? in what manner? for what purpose? how propagated and cultivated? When does it blossom and bear fruit? Is it useful for food? what part is thus used? how prepared? If the root is used, when dug up? How stored for use? Is it an article of commerce? Is it used in manufactures? What is its form? what is its color? what is its texture? its height? breadth? weight?

3. *On minerals and metals.*—What is that? To what class of substance does it belong? where is it found? How is it procured? who procures it? What is it useful for? how is it rendered useful?

4. *On articles composed of animal, vegetable, mineral substances.*—What is that? Of what substances is it composed? Where were these procured? How was it manufactured? by whom? For what purpose? with what instruments? Is it an article of commerce? from whence imported? where exported? Who buys it? who sells it? By whom is it used? when is it generally used? where is it used? how is it used?

The names of the different periods by which time is measured, from a second to a century, should be written; and names of measures by which space is measured. Give a variety of nouns, and require all the adjectives to be added which the children can think of, suggesting some yourself.

Sometimes write lists of active verbs, asking the children to tell you all they can think of which men and women can do with their eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c., &c.; for instance, men can see, look, hear, smell, eat, chew, swallow, hold, throw, catch, dig, plough, run, jump, stand, &c., &c.; of course, the lists of these words will be endless. The verbs should be written in different tenses; pronouns added; adverbs of time, place, manner, &c.—*Mrs. Tuckfield.*

Framing Words into Sentences.

I was in the habit of dictating, or giving out to my pupils,—each having a slate—a set of words, which they were required to write down. I always dictated very slowly, that all might have ample time. When the dictation was completed, they were required to exercise their ingenuity in so putting them into sentences of their own construction that they would make sense, as parts of those sentences.

Suppose the words dictated or given out were *apples, corn, moon, hat, gold, red*; and suppose the pupils were required to incorporate them into

sentences. The following might be the result of the efforts of some very young pupils.

Apples are good to eat.

A new *hat*.

Corn grows.

Gold is yellow.

The bright *moon*.

A piece of *red* cloth.

Others would probably say much more. Perhaps their lists would read thus:

I am very fond of *apples*. I love to look at the *moon*. My father raises *corn*. Some *hats* are made of wool.

Money is made of *gold* and silver and copper.

There is a bird called a *red* bird.

Sometimes I gave them a much longer list than this, and required them to select a certain number of the words, such as they chose, and "frame in." I have sometimes given out twenty or thirty words, and required them to select seven of those which appeared to them most interesting.

In other instances I have requested all those who preferred to do so, to select some favorite word, and relate, on their slates, a story about it; spending their whole time on that single word and the story. I have in this way occasionally drawn out quite a large story from a boy who at the first thought he could do nothing.

I recollect in particular, having given out, on a certain occasion, the word *bee* among the rest. One of my boys, scarcely more than ten years of age, immediately wrote a long account of an adventure, in a meadow, with a nest of bumble bees.

Another mode of this exercise, still more interesting to some of my older pupils, consisted in framing as many of the words of the list as they could into a single sentence or verse. I have sometimes found half a dozen or even more words crowded into two or three lines across the slate.

This exercise, in its varied forms and diversities, was one of the best I ever introduced into my school. It both interested my pupils, and was a source of much instruction—*Confessions of a Schoolmaster.*

Journal Writing.

Every scholar should be required, as a daily lesson, to keep a journal, or to bring the teacher an account upon slate or paper, of something that he has heard, or read or observed. If a class has been listening to a lecture,—they should be required to give an account of it in the shape of notes; if they have been reading a book—they should be desired to analyze its contents—and state them in writing; if they have been out walking—they should narrate the objects or incidents with which they were the most interested. Every time one of these exercises is presented to the teacher, it gives him an opportunity of correcting some fault in spelling, or of inelegant and redundant expressions, or of explaining some rule of punctuation, or of grammar, of the practical application of which the pupil would otherwise remain ignorant; while he is made to take part in his own instruction, teaching himself by forcing his own mind to attend, observe, reflect in order that he may remember something to put down in writing.—*W. E. Hickson.*

Letter Writing.

It will be found a very useful exercise in composition to state to the class, that you have just received a letter, making such and such inquiries, (stating them,) and that you wish each member of the class to prepare an answer, and as the mail will close at such an hour, or in so many minutes, the answer must be ready at that time.

Scholars should be shown how to begin and end, fold and direct a letter.

The following subjects for letters are taken from *Frost's Early Exercises in Composition*:

A letter to a relation describing the writer's occupations and studies at school. A letter to an acquaintance describing the writer's last holiday amusements. Another giving an account of a visit to the city. Another giving an account of an afternoon's ride in the country. A billet of invitation to dinner, to spend the evening, to join a riding party, &c. &c. A letter to a friend, requesting the loan of a book. A letter of advice, respecting associates and modes of spending leisure time. A letter to a friend, recommending early rising. A letter from a young lady to her school-mate, descanting on her favorite books and authors.—Another respecting favorite pursuits and amusements. Another describing a garden. Another respecting house plants and the care of them. Another respecting rambles in the fields, botanizing, &c. A letter asking a favor. The answer. A letter soliciting a situation as clerk in a store. The answer. A letter relating to the events of a journey.

VOCAL MUSIC.

The following extracts, while they abound in hints which the teacher can turn to good account in giving instruction in vocal music, will we trust to some extent promote the cause of social, as well as of common school improvement, by showing how widely and beneficently the pleasures of vocal music can be in a single question diffused through all classes of society by means of elementary schools.

If a teacher cannot give lessons in this branch it will not be difficult to find some one in the district or town willing to devote one or two hours in the evening, or in the afternoon of Saturday or Wednesday to this object, if applied to in the right spirit.

Habitual cheerfulness and good humor are so essential to the moral training of children, that every means should be encouraged having a tendency to promote it in a school; and this is one of the reasons why the study of vocal music is universally introduced in all the best continental schools. There are few influences so powerful over the mind as music, and, perhaps, no means so efficacious in restoring the tone of good humor in a school which some accidental differences may have disturbed as a cheerful school chorus. Children cannot quarrel and sing at the same time. The influence of cheerful sounds calms the passions, softens the temper, and subdues the most sullen moods.

Singing, and the notation of music, are taught in all the schools in Holland, and even in the *Spinhouse*, or prison for juvenile delinquents, at Rotterdam. In Prussia, the notation of music is neglected in the primary schools; but singing is taught by ear. In every gymnasium however, or high grammar school, throughout Germany, we found that a singing master was considered quite as indispensable as a master for Latin and Greek. At the half-yearly examination of a

school, when the public are invited to attend, the programme invariably states, that certain pieces of choral music will be performed by the pupils and teachers.

At Bonn, on the occasion of a marriage, the ceremony of which we were invited to witness, a class of boys and girls from the town free school attended and sung, in a very effective manner, several choruses from the 12th Mass of Mozart. At Dresden, we heard an anthem sung by a choir of boys in the street, at the door of the parents of one of their school-fellows lately dead. The harmony and the voices were excellent, and this touching mode of giving expression to a mournful sympathy (a custom generally followed) made an impression upon our minds which will not be easily effaced.

It is not, however, music of a solemn or grave character which should be chiefly encouraged in a children's school;—as a moral engine we want not the music that will sadden, but that which has a cheerfultizing influence. Music is now recognized as a legitimate branch of instruction even for the poorest by all but great educational societies, but where it is confined to simple psalmody, its usefulness is very limited. Children take but little interest in grave or plaintive airs. The music which pleases them, in which they will always take a part with eagerness, is that which harmonizes best with the buoyant spirits of youth; lively movements calculated to arouse their dormant energies and invigorate their faculties after a fatiguing lesson, and these arranged to useful moral songs, are much better adapted to the school-room and playground than the solemn strains appropriate exclusively to the act of public and private worship, or to a funeral service.

With singing it is always desirable that steps should be taken to teach children effectively the notation of music, so that their acquaintance with an innocent and rational recreation suitable for all ages may not be confined to a few tunes taught by ear.—*W. E. Hickson*.

In Germany says Mr. Wyse in his work on Education, every pupil sings; every master plays on that most difficult and magnificent of all instruments, the organ. In fact, travel where you may, the results of this education every where meet you;—in the mountain, in the plain—in the chapel, in the cathedral—you every where hear the music of the human voice; and wherever you hear it, it is impossible not to bow down before it—not to feel yourself profoundly and solemnly moved. Well may Haydn have asserted that the finest things he ever heard in music, did not approach the effect produced by the uniting of the voices of the London charity children, at the anniversary meeting in St. Paul's Cathedral. And why are these voices not heard in every church and chapel in the land? why is singing not taught in our schools? A better preservative of pure morals—a more delightful addition to their innocent amusements—a more cheerful stimulant to all their exercises, whether of labor, study, or religion—can scarcely be devised. Nor would its effects be confined to the school-room or to childhood; it would soon penetrate the pat-

* See also Connecticut Common School Journal. Vol. I, p. 15, 23, 39, 55, 169; Vol. II, p. 90, 161,

ernal dwelling; in another generation it would be natural to the land.

In Switzerland, says a recent tourist, we have listened to the peasant children's songs, as they went out to their morning occupations; and saw their hearts enkindled to the highest tones of music and poetry, by the setting sun, or the familiar objects of nature, each of which was made to echo some truth, or point to some duty, by an appropriate song. We have heard them singing 'the harvest hymn,' as they went forth, before day-light to gather in the grain. We have seen them assembled in groups, at night, chanting a hymn of praise for the glories of the heavens, or joining in some patriotic chorus, or some social melody; instead of the frivolous and corrupting conversation, which so often renders such meetings the source of evil. In addition to this, we visited communities, where the youth had been trained from their childhood to exercises in vocal music, of such a character as to elevate, instead of debasing the mind; and have found, that it served in the same manner to cheer their social assemblies, in place of the noise of folly, or the poisoned cup of intoxication. We have seen the young men of such a community assembled, to the number of several hundreds, from a circuit of twenty miles; and instead of spending a day of festivity in rioting and drunkenness, pass the whole time, with the exception of that employed in a frugal repast and a social meeting, in a concert of social, moral, and religious hymns, and devote the proceeds of the exhibition to some object of benevolence.

Rules to be observed in teaching, do.

1st. Do not speak of singing as a difficult art, but rather as a very natural, agreeable, and necessary one, for which our throats, and ears, and hearts were designed, and which has been, and may be easily learnt.

2d. Make the exercise a privilege, and, if you please, a reward, allowing only the well behaved to join in it.

3d. Have the exercise early after opening the school, to attract the children early.

4th. Use familiar language in speaking of it.

5th. Begin with teaching well the most important parts, and some simple, short, and agreeable tune, or part of a tune, with words. Sing it over every day until it is known. Do not forget that children will want to sing immediately, and not to delay a week or a month on the rules alone.

6th. When all can sing a little, let the teacher sing a base, or some other part with them, without telling them he is going to interrupt them. They will soon be able to sing one, two, or three parts themselves.

7th. If the teacher feels diffident about commencing, let him find one or more scholars who sing, and train them first alone. They will afterwards aid him in leading the others. Or he may get the chorister of the parish to begin with a few lessons, on such principles as are given below.

If the pupils are taught to sing well, even two or three single tunes only, the parents will probably be gratified and attracted to the school, and the exhibitions may be made more interesting.

Mode of teaching the notation of Music.

The teacher would of course begin by describing the musical characters on a blackboard, and he would question the children, and cross-question them, upon the subject in a manner which would readily suggest itself. He would describe the gamut, or diatonic scale, upon a board, and teach the children to sing through the scale, pointing to each note as they sang it. He would also exercise them by the same means in rising by thirds, fifths, and octaves, and descending by similar gradations. In the French elementary schools the course is this:—The children are first taught by the ear a simple lively melody. When they can sing it perfectly by ear, the music is then written out with chalk upon a blackboard. The children then again sing through the air, the teacher pointing to each note as they sing it. By this means they see how the sounds, with which they are already familiar, are expressed by notation; and they are afterwards exercised in singing detached passages of the same air, and then detached notes, till they can sing any note correctly when they see it. To enable him to have any clear ideas on the subject, you must put the music before him, although he may sing it at first merely by ear. He will then see that the higher notes are placed on the upper part of the staff, the lower notes at the bottom; that the white notes are always held longer than the black ones; and by this means he will gain a practical acquaintance with the subject, which, however little, will be a sure foundation for future attainments. There can be no difficulty in carrying this plan into effect in a school; because, although music is dear, one copy of a song, or of a collection of songs, will always suffice, as music-paper is cheap, and one hundred manuscript copies may easily be taken by the children who have learned to write.

(To be continued.)

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